



Transit Services

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

April 16, 2014

Dear Sec. Foxx,

Wichita Transit is pleased to offer our support for the City of Wichita planning application for Northern Flyer (the Heartland Flyer Extension) environmental reviews being filed for under the US Department of Transportation National Infrastructure Investments. This Notice announced the availability of \$35M to be awarded by USDOT for planning grants for infrastructure projects that will have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area or a region. Wichita Transit offers complete support to this project to improve connectivity throughout the region and the access that it provides to our citizens.

Wichita Transit is the designated public transit provider in the Wichita area providing over 2 million rides annually. The Northern Flyer project supports both local goals as well as national goals established by USDOT to improve access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for disconnected communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Much of the region in the 200 mile Service Gap is auto-centric, making mobility for disadvantaged populations difficult. Hindering access to the middle class, the lack of transportation choice is a drag on local and regional economic growth. By funding environmental reviews for the Northern Flyer project, the region will be one step closer to solving this huge economic and connectivity problem.

The alignment of the purposes of both Wichita Transit and the Northern Flyer strengthens the attainment of important regional goals to provide connectivity among our communities and access to services for our citizens. Transportation issues extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries. Issues of congestion, economic development and a clean environment are regional in nature and require a regional solution.

Transit Operations Center

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Wichita Transit recently completed a Vision Plan for the long-range development of public transportation services in the area. A key component to developing the plan was an extended public input process. Several planning efforts in the Wichita area indicate the importance of regional connectivity including the Wichita Transit Vision Plan, Kansas DOT Regional Transit Model Implementation Plan and Kansas Health Foundation Transit Impact Analysis. A consistent theme in these plans is the importance of regional transportation to provide access to our citizens for employment, medical services, education and recreation.

The Northern Flyer is part of a regional effort to connect the Wichita metropolitan area and surrounding counties with other key service and employment centers in this region. The project is a crucial component in enhanced regional mobility and connectivity. There are coordinated activities that support this effort:

- Wichita Transit provides access to medical, education and employment centers in the city. Plans are now being developed for regional service improvements that support connections to such centers that reach beyond Wichita into neighboring counties and cities, enhancing growth of the middle class.
- Kansas DOT is completing plans to introduce regional coordination for transportation among counties.
- Wichita transit is in initial planning stages to convert the transit center into a multimodal transit center partnering with Greyhound. This facility is located 2 blocks from the proposed Northern Flyer stop at Union Station in downtown Wichita.
- The Douglas Avenue Transit Improvement project will transform Douglas Avenue adjacent to Union Station in Wichita to a transit intensive corridor with improved transit access, amenities and service.

We believe that the Northern Flyer (Heartland Flyer Extension) meets national goals for regionally significant projects and if completed will provide economic, employment, and mobility benefits to our region for generations. Wichita transit urges selection of the City of Wichita, Kansas planning application for environmental reviews for this important passenger rail project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Spade', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Steve Spade

Director, Wichita Transit